a personal union since 1386. In 1569, under the Union of Lublin, she lost her independence altogether, and until the partitions of Poland in 1772–93 she shared a common history with that country. One of the most enduring results of the Polish régime was the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in what had hitherto been a practically pagan State, at a time when Lutheranism was being introduced by the Baltic Barons in Livonia and Estonia.[1]

In the sixteenth century the power of the Teutonic Knights in the latter Provinces began to weaken under repeated assaults from the Russians, which reached their high-water-mark under Ivan the Terrible between 1558 and 1584. In 1521 Estonia had already accepted the protection of Sweden; and in 1560, after the dissolution of the Teutonic Order, Poland annexed Courland and Livonia, although a large part of the latter was afterwards wrested from her by the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, in 1626. The districts which thus came under Swedish rule enjoyed a somewhat more liberal régime than had hitherto been their lot. The privileges of the Baltic Barons were curtailed, and something was done towards national education—it was during this period that the University of Dorpat was founded in Estonia. In Courland, however, where the Barons were left a very free hand, owing to Poland's preoccupations elsewhere, the peasants were no better treated during this period than they had been before.

*Russian Rule (1710–1918).* Finally, the eighteenth century saw the defeat of Charles XII by Peter the Great at Poltava (1709) and the gradual passing of control over the Baltic Provinces from the declining Swedish Empire and Poland to Russia.[2] The period of Russian domination, which lasted down to the outbreak of the World War, opened ominously, although conditions improved somewhat during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In Lithuania the partition of Poland was followed by a period of Russification; the Orthodox religion was introduced, and Catholic ecclesiastical property was to a large extent handed over to the Orthodox Church; the University of Vilna and the higher schools were closed, and the use of the Lithuanian language was forbidden in all schools. In 1861 the peasants were liberated and granted the right to hold a small amount of land; but, after the Polish insurrection of 1863, which was sternly suppressed by Muraviev, it was decreed that

[1] Swedish rule was later a decisive factor in the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Estonia.

[2] Riga was captured in 1710 and Reval soon after. Livonia and Estonia were ceded to Russia by the Peace of Nystadt in 1721; Courland gradually became to all intents and purposes a Russian protectorate, and in 1795 formally acknowledged the suzerainty of Catherine the Great. In the course of the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795 the whole of Lithuania proper passed into the hands of Russia, although Memel remained part of Prussia, in which it had been incorporated in the sixteenth century.

only adherents of the Orthodox religion might hold land, and the following year the writing of Lithuanian in Latin characters was forbidden. In 1894 Catholics were forbidden to hold any position, however small, in the central or local administrative services. None the less, the end of the century saw the foundation of a nationalist movement, led by Dr. Basanavicius, and the acquisition by the peasantry of a certain amount of land in small-holdings through the establishment of land banks and co-operative societies. In 1904 the law forbidding the printing of the Lithuanian language in Latin characters was repealed, and the flood of nationalist literature increased in volume.

In the other Provinces the situation of the peasants was even worse than in Lithuania, owing to the presence of the Baltic Barons, who were always loyal subjects of the Tsars, and who from the outset took a leading part in the administration of the Russian Empire. Under Russian rule the Barons secured the restoration of all privileges of which they had been deprived under the Swedish régime; moreover, they now created a closed corporation, consisting of 172 families which alone had the right to own land. Various attempts made by successive Tsars to improve the lot of the peasants were frustrated by the Barons, and serious rebellions were put down in 1783–4 and again in 1802. After the latter, Alexander I issued an ordinance in 1804 limiting serfdom, but its effects were nullified by the Barons. Laws abolishing personal serfdom altogether in Estonia (1816), Courland (1817), and Livonia (1819)[1] did little to improve matters, since freedom was of little use to peasants with no claim either to tenancy or ownership of land. In 1849, however, Alexander II enacted a new Agrarian Law abolishing forced labour and providing for the purchase or hire of certain lands by the peasant communes. Under Alexander III (1881–94) a determined policy of Russification was initiated, aimed as much at the German as at the native population; indeed, the later native movement of 1905 may be traced largely to the indirect encouragement which it now received from the Russian Government's anti-German policy. Russian law and police organization were substituted for the existing German system, and the Russian language was made compulsory in schools. On the other hand, Letts and Estonians were allowed to hold Government posts. Towards the end of the century, too, there was an improvement in the material status of the peasantry; the Russian railways brought trade to the ports of Riga and Libau, and in the towns a small proletarian class grew up which was ripe for the spread of revolutionary ideas. As in Lithuania, nationalist movements were set on foot, and Young Lett and Estonian parties were formed.

These movements, in all three countries, were quick to exploit the

[1] The first emancipation of serfs in the whole Empire was in the Baltic Provinces.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1938 RB1 Baltic States Lithuania

British Government also expressed the hope that the German Government could see its way to interpreting the words 'Germany's south-eastern and north-eastern frontiers' so as to cover also at least the Soviet Union, Latvia, and Estonia, as well as the States actually contiguous to Germany. The German Government vouchsafed no reply to the British *questionnaire*.

In January 1937 there were symptoms of a recrudescence of hostility when the German press published allegations that the Lithuanian Government contemplated the reorganization of the Army under the supervision of Soviet officers, and that there was talk in Kaunas of large deliveries of arms from the U.S.S.R.

While Lithuania's relations with Germany on the whole improved, the same could not be said of her relations with Poland; and indeed, they were a matter of concern not only to the latter, who in 1936 showed a desire for reconciliation—albeit on her own terms—but also to the Latvian[1] and Estonian Governments, who realized that until the Vilna dispute had been liquidated the relations of the Baltic States with Poland could not be as close as they would like. How the Polish Government, in March 1938, finally took matters into their own hands, and forced the issue by presenting Lithuania with an ultimatum, backed by the concentration of troops on the frontier, is related in the following chapter.[2] It may be suggested here, however, that once the Vilna controversy has been settled, Poland's scheme for a neutral *bloc* stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea may be nearer to realization than at any time since the World War.

## VI. SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF LITHUANIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

### 1. Vilna

Up to the Treaty of Union of Lublin in 1569, Vilna had been the capital of the Lithuanian Kingdom; by the time of the partitions of Poland and the Russian annexation of Lithuania at the end of the eighteenth century, however, it had become a centre of Polish, rather than of Lithuanian, culture. In 1918 the new Polish and Lithuanian States both laid claim to possession of the city and of the district surrounding it.[3]

When the Germans evacuated Lithuania at the end of 1918, Vilna was proclaimed the capital of the new Republic and renamed Vilnius.

[1] At the end of March 1936 the Latvian Foreign Minister visited Warsaw to discuss Polish-Lithuanian relations.

[2] See below, pp. 92–3.

[3] The ethnographical bases of the rival claims are somewhat confused. The Lithuanians claim that the only reliable census was that of 1861, which showed a proportion of 74·3 per cent. Lithuanian- to 16·2 per cent. Polish-speaking inhabitants of the relevant parts of the

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Baltic Countries RBI



661 60,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia. A number of
793 priests were murdered, and some are said to have been cruci-
798 fied. In Latvia and Estonia the numbers deported appear to have been smaller; but the clergy of all denominations were hounded, slain, and shipped to labor camps. It is no doubt correct to say that no year in the history of predatory imperialism since the dawn of time has been characterized by so complete a lack of restraint. The individuality of the peoples was rooted out with implacable determination.

661 The Nazis drove the Russians out again, but in turn re-
798 sorted to suppressions of their own. It was a time of dire dis-
697 tress for the Jewish minority, and of course also for anyone deemed to be opposed to their theories of race superiority. Deeply religious folk from the Baltic States were shipped to concentration camps. The Russians returned during the summer of 1944. This time large numbers of Lithuanians in particular fled to the West, the total being estimated at 80,000. Of the remaining inhabitants of the three countries, it is believed that more than 500,000 have been seized and sent off to Russian labor camps. There have been at least six round-ups of slaves. The first was in Estonia at the close of 1948, and it is believed that 50,000 persons were taken from their homes. The others have been carried out with the same irrational callousness. The deportations have stripped the countries affected of virtually all religious leadership which might have opposed Russian domination. Only 30 of Estonia's 250 Lutheran clergymen are still at work there, and comparable figures have been computed for Latvia. One Catholic priest out of five remains in Lithuania.

177 It is hardly necessary to state that the economies of the
461 countries affected are exploited for the benefit of Russia. But
961 one can grasp only with extreme difficulty the extent to which agents of Moscow dominate political and cultural activity.

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Baltic Countries RBI



Even Nazism was by comparison liberal. Officials assigned the task, direct the government, the press, and education. The Russian language is of course taught in the schools. A relatively recent report from Estonia reads:

> Teachers of the Russian language must explain to their pupils the universal importance of this great tongue. It is the language used by Lenin, the greatest genius of the human race. It is the tongue in which Stalin addresses the toiling masses of the world. The Russian language will enable the student to understand Russian culture . . . and to acquire a knowledge of the world's most notable scientific achievements.

Training in the Russian language is accompanied by the dissemination of Communist classics, notably the works of Lenin, made available in cheap editions and foisted off on workers regardless of their wishes. Young people in particular are targets for Communist indoctrination, and nowhere have they been bombarded with greater vigor than in the Baltic area. There can be little doubt that in twenty years virtually all awareness of Christian thought and feeling will have disappeared, save among the rare survivors of an older generation.

All the usual devices—nationalization of Church property, suppression of religious education—have of course been resorted to here. The kolkhoz system has been widely introduced into Lithuania, largely in order to restore the efficiency of an agricultural system depleted of usable labor by the deportations. Although nearly all of these are reported to be under direct Russian control, the results appear to have been disappointing. A report assumed to be reliable has this to say:

> The names of Estonian kolkhozes provide a most interesting commentary on Communist propaganda and on the strict hierarchical sys-

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union
Karelians R65
Baltic Countries RB1



K. 162 and Karelian plays.[21] If these figures reflect the ethnical composition of Karelia more or less accurately, they would mean that the Karelo-Finnish element has been reduced to one-quarter of the total population of the country.

## *III. THE BALTIC SOVIET REPUBLICS*

Ba. 101 Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are usually linked together under the collective name of 'Baltic States', but there is a considerable difference between Latvia and Estonia on the one hand and Lithuania on the other.

The common fate which befell the three Baltic sovereign States in 1939–40 established an understandable feeling of solidarity between the populations of these countries annexed by Soviet Russia; yet historically and culturally a considerable cleavage exists between the Lithuanians and the other two Baltic nations. In the first place the Lithuanians having formed part of the medieval Lithuanian-Russian State are historically more closely connected with the Russians than the Latvians or the Estonians. Secondly, the majority of Lithuanians have not been exposed to the same strong German influence as Latvians or Estonians. The three peoples, however, have in common their ties with the West to which the Lithuanians are linked by their Roman Catholic religion.

In their relationship to Russia the three Baltic countries also fulfil different functions. Latvia and Estonia serve Russia as a way of access to the Baltic Sea and Lithuania acts primarily as a bulwark against Polish nationalism.

### TWO RUSSIAN METHODS

Ba. 175 177 The history of the Baltic Provinces shows that Russians have applied both harsh and lenient methods in the endeavour to keep them under their rule. The 'harsh method' was used by Ivan the Terrible during the Livonian War which lasted twenty-five years (1558–83). Soviet historians paid special attention to Ivan's Baltic policy and one of them, P. Y. Vipper, even described the Livonian War as a 'just war, not a war of aggression'. Ivan's way in dealing with the occupied Eastern Livonia – Eastern Estonia and Eastern Latvia in terms of modern geography – consisted in energetic measures of assimilation, in distributing the confiscated land among Russian boyars and in building Russian Orthodox Churches in the conquered towns.[22] In brief, Ivan ignored the wishes of the occupied Baltic territories and set out to establish a truly Russian order. Vipper, who mentions all these facts in his biography of Ivan, fails to conclude from them that they accounted for the termination of Russian rule in Livonia.

Peter the Great, who, 150 years after Ivan the Terrible annexed

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union R1
Baltic Countries RB1

THE BALTIC SOVIET REPUBLICS

Estonia and parts of Latvia to the Russian Empire, acted differently and left intact the internal order which he had found there. Peter and his successors, who enlarged Russia's Baltic domain, respected that order with all its shortcomings, especially the tyrannic rule exercised by a German Baltic upper class over Latvians and Estonians. This policy of non-interference was observed to the end of the nineteenth century, up to the reign of Czar Alexander III who curbed the influence of the German Baltic barons and embarked on a policy of Russification.

The Soviet régime faithfully copied the 'iron hand' method of Ivan the Terrible in all questions concerning the internal administration of the Baltic Provinces, but at the same time took over the imperialistic will of Peter the Great as far as the Baltic Sea was concerned. The men in the Kremlin, therefore, never considered the loss of the Baltic Provinces after the October Revolution as the last word of history. They always felt that the separation from Russia of the Baltic coastal areas ran contrary to the lessons of history and geography. Although recognizing the independence of the Baltic States *de jure* and concluding non-aggression treaties with them the Soviet ruling circles never accepted their independence *de facto*. No Russian communist was able to reconcile himself lightheartedly to the establishment of bourgeois régimes in the Baltic countries. The revolutionary movements of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania had been organically linked with Russian Bolshevism, and the failure of the Baltic communists to stay in power was thus an implicit failure of the Russian Soviet Government. It was bound to be avenged at an opportune moment.

THE BALTIC DIASPORA IN THE U.S.S.R.

In the inter-war period the Soviet leaders and even the Russian people could never lose sight of the Baltic problem since a large number of Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians continued to live in their midst despite the existence of independent Baltic States. Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians, the latter to a lesser extent, were 'peoples of the Soviet Union' long before the transformation of the Baltic countries into Soviet Republics.

It is true that there was no 'Little Latvia' or 'Little Estonia' in the form of a special territorial unit within the framework of the U.S.S.R. on the same lines as 'Little Rumania' – the Moldavian A.S.S.R. or 'Little Finland' – the Karelian A.S.S.R. None the less the tens of thousands of Latvians and Estonians who were scattered all over the Soviet Union fulfilled the same propaganda functions as those exercised in other cases by special Autonomous Republics.

The Baltic diaspora in the Soviet Union had various origins. There was first of all a strong Latvian and Estonian peasant immigration into

177.18

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 RL Soviet Union RL
Baltic Countries RBL



Ba. 186 563 S.U. 563

posts in the Soviet state administration, but also kept alive their own local problems. They cultivated the memory of the ephemeral Soviet Republics which in 1918–19 had existed in parts of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and prepared themselves for a fresh start. 'We shall never surrender to anybody the banner of Soviet Latvia' – said the Latvian communist Y. Krumin, in 1935 – 'the banner of the first dictatorship of the Latvian proletariat and we shall again carry this banner into the fight for a new Latvia which, freed from the previous mistakes and weaknesses, will victoriously conclude the great cause started in 1919'.[38]

As *émigrés* in the Soviet Union the Baltic communists analysed their mistakes in great detail, and admitted that they had failed to understand the importance of the national problem. During the short period in which they had been in power the Baltic communists had indeed been concerned only with the creation of an abstract 'workers' and 'peasants' State. They did not realize that problems of language and culture were of interest to workers and peasants as well and that the aspirations towards an Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian national State could not be dismissed lightly as purely bourgeois conceptions.*

## BALTIC IN FORM – RUSSIAN IN ESSENCE

Ba. 186 177.18

In 1940 the Soviet Government and the Baltic communists had their second start in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Have they shown since then that they have learned the lessons of the abortive experiments in 1918–19? Yes and no. They have paid lip-service to the national feelings of the three countries but have simultaneously violated their genuine national interests in the most flagrant way. The Soviet régime, it is true, no longer disregarded the national traditions of the Baltic peoples but 'readjusted' them so that they would fit into the general pattern of Russian State interests.

One particularly strong tendency was to accentuate whenever possible the anti-German aspects in the history and literature of the Baltic peoples, and, at the same time, completely to suppress any anti-Russian propen-

* The first Soviet Lithuania supplies an interesting example of the extent to which the communists ignored the national factor. The manifesto of the 'Provisional Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Government of Lithuania', set up in December 1918, mentioned only social and economic problems. The composition of the so-called Lithuanian Soviet Government itself showed that the Soviet power considered 'Lithuania' as a geographical setting for a multi-national State and not as a national State of the Lithuanians. The Government was made up of two Poles, two Jews and four Lithuanians, and it would have included Byelorussians had it been possible to find suitable Byelorussian communists in Vilna.

The chairman of the Lithuanian Soviet Government, V.S. Mitskevitch-Kansukas, later described as a serious political error the fact that Lithuanian communists did not adhere to the principle of national self-determination to the point of separation and had thus created the impression that the Lithuanian Soviet Government was simply another occupation government maintained in power by Red Army bayonets.[39]

[Cf. category 116, pp. 105-108, RL Sov. Union; 21: Kolarz – Analyst]

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union R1
Baltic Countries RR1



sities therein. These aims were most easily realized in the case of the Lithuanians, ample material being provided for their anti-German past by their struggle against the Teutonic Knights and above all by the Battle of Tannenberg (1410) when Lithuanians and Russians had fought on the same side.

In Latvia, Soviet authorities used for their own purposes the legend of the national hero, Lachplesis, fighting against the 'Black Knight'. According to the war-time interpretation of the legend, Lachplesis was a kind of guerilla leader who defeated the Germans; in the post-war period he appeared as the personification of the victorious Soviet power asserting itself against the forces of darkness and reaction. In Estonia, the Soviet régime made similar use of Kalev, the hero of the national epic, *Kalevipoeg*, whom Soviet propaganda represented as the champion of Russian-Estonian co-operation. This interpretation is based on a reference in the epic to a bridge which Kalev began to build across the Lake Peipus.

Soviet policy in the Baltic States can be characterized not only by the familiar official slogan, 'National in form, socialist in content', but also by the formula 'Baltic in form, Russian in essence'. Particularly since 1945 the Soviet régime has treated the Baltic States not only as Soviet provinces but also as part of the Russian living space. The influx of Russians into the Baltic Republics is important both in quantity and in quality. The Soviet Government has not been so clumsy as to appoint Russians to such posts as those of the Prime Ministers of the Baltic Republics or of the chairmen of the local Supreme Soviets. Even the first party secretaries are natives of the countries concerned. By a coincidence, however, their deputies are Russians in all three republics and there are many more Russians in responsible and influential party positions. Moscow also sent administrators, economic experts and skilled workers. On the other hand, the Baltic communists were unable to acquire any important posts in Moscow. After the annexation of the Baltic Republics the leaders of the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian communists were not admitted into the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, but became only alternate members of that body.

The Russians not only occupied important key positions in the Baltic Republics as individuals but also assumed the status of a second State-nation in each. Russian was introduced as a State language on the same footing as Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian, and in the new coats of arms of the three Soviet Republics the motto, 'Workers of the World Unite', appeared in both the local and the Russian languages.